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# PARKS AND RECREATION

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# NEW YORK CITY'S PARKS, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The park movement of the United States was born in New York City about 100 years ago. Then, for the first time in the history of our nation a few gifted men recognized the vital need for all citizens in a democratic society to have green, open spaces for health and recreation.

The philosophy of our great city parks expressed in the progressive opinions of such prophets as Andrew Jackson Downing, William Cullen Bryant, and, particularly Frederick Law Olmsted was based upon the two-fold recognition that man's social nature stands first in order of cultivation and that a city without a profusion of carefully planned parks and public places for amusement "would be devoured by its own ugliness and would rapidly experience economic decline."

These men of vision were primarily concerned with the beautification of the city and the physical and mental well-being of the city's citizens. But they were also eminently practical men and could point out less than five years after Central Park had been inaugurated "that Central Park has been, in merely an economic point of view, one of the wisest measures ever undertaken by the City. It has more than quadrupled the value of the property in its vicinity." Owing to their vision and determined efforts against those who constantly tried to cut them down on funds, New York City possesses a nucleus of park land that still stands as the most complete of any city in the nation.

The fortunes of New York's parks and playgrounds have grown and declined in succeeding periods. The creative energies of the 1860's and 1870's were sapped by political corruption at the turn of the century and again after the First World War, when many of today's problems—disorganization, inept planning, austerity budgets, and lack of a well-trained labor force—brought about decay of the park system.

Then came the 1930's, a period in which for the wrong reasons, but with the right results, the city's parks reached their highest points in modern times. This was due to the far-reaching programs of land acquisition and the development of hundreds of new facilities. It was in the Thirties that the administration of the parks was reorganized and the Department itself established. Funds were allotted or gained from every available source, whether private, city, state, or, when possible federal. Parks were clean and well-maintained. What had been said about Paris parks in their heyday was said about New York: "the park police arrested falling leaves before they could reach the ground."

That age has long disappeared. Today, despite the affluence of modern society and despite serious efforts of recent years, the City's parks are far behind in meeting recreation needs, particularly for thousands of children living in slum areas.

Parks of all sizes are so necessary to the well-being of a city that they cannot be considered mere luxuries.

If parks are allowed to lag behind they will begin to decay. Once decay establishes itself further growth will become more and more difficult and future generations will speak contemptuously of the city's blight the forefathers had forced upon them by neglect.

Today New York City possesses one of the world's largest park systems. But within this system there are far too many indications of decay and lag. The death of a great park system does not happen suddenly. Those who live with it may not always perceive the real extent or the chain reaction of the minor deteriorations that slowly build up and overwhelm them.

The 15-year record of the New York City Administration on park issues is perfectly clear. The record shows that the officials of that administration do not care very much about parks and with rare exceptions do not understand why parks are necessary for the well-being of the city's citizens. It is time to look squarely at the record. In the past 15 years many parks have practically gone down the drain. Despite the construction of a number of meritorious facilities, over all it has been a thoroughly disgraceful job—a piece-meal, patch-work job—devoid of taste, creativity or contemporary ideas.

There are thousands of New Yorkers in every Borough who remember, as I do, the days when *all* parks were a pleasure to visit.

Today the record of the past 15 years has totally dulled our critical capabilities. Today when a park is even half-way decent we are stunned.

To paraphrase the comment of one park official "there are two routes we take of Manhattan's parks if we want to show them to a foreign visitor. One is where you will find everything well-kept, beautiful. The other (which we never take) leads through a mess where everything is stagnant, rotten, torn up."

I believe it is highly significant that only in recent weeks has the Administration been goaded into the first steps to solve the pressing recreation and park needs of the city. The \$175,000 for a study of recreation needs and how to fill them is a praiseworthy allocation; those individuals who are at work or about to begin work deserve all the help and encouragement they can get from the Mayor's office. The study, expected to be finished in June of 1966, seems even at this early stage to hold great promise. I believe that the Recreation Study may become one of the most important documents for the future of New York that has been issued in a hundred years.

To cure the manifold defects of our parks today, I will work for public open space and recreation that will combine the best concepts of the past with all the exciting ideas of today. I will endeavor to raise the morale of the Park Department employees, which has decreased throughout the years. I am going to enlist those individuals of talent, force, taste, and imagination who, in the past, have attempted to design and create new parks but who have been discouraged.

My Park and Recreation program has five specific goals: 1. to put parks and playgrounds in those congested and slum areas where there are now far too few facilities. 2. to derive the maximum benefit from existing parks by bringing them up to high standards. 3. to exploit to the fullest the advantages of the waterfront, the shorefront, and greenbelts. 4. to bring about a better balance of recreational opportunities in each Borough. 5. to embark upon a program for the beautification of the City.

## **I. MORE FACILITIES**

One of the pressing recreation needs is to create neighborhood parks throughout the entire city, particularly in those areas where there is a grave lack of facilities of any kind. I will create dozens of new small parks of various types throughout the city.

### **1. Vest-Pocket Parks**

(a) These sitting areas can be as small as a single building lot or, in certain cases, even smaller. They will be furnished with permanent planting and facilities for sitting and relaxation. Some will be primarily for the elderly; others for mothers with small children.

(b) Others of the so-called "knock-down" vest pocket parks will be furnished with temporary equipment. For these the City will utilize temporarily a city-owned vacant plot as a park with transportable recreational equipment until final disposition is made of that plot. The City might also consider renting a vacant lot for a set period of time as a temporary park until a permanent facility can be constructed nearby.

### **2. Play Streets as Parks**

(a) In slum areas, the streets are often the most popular areas. I will develop and further enhance many streets for play purposes, by closing off a greater number for play purposes, forbidding parking, and even using portable recreation equipment.

### **3. Backyard Parks**

(a) This type of park can be particularly effective in certain slum areas where now there are four or five dwellings with rear gardens, most of which are fenced off and in extremely bad state of

repair. I will encourage the rehabilitation of such areas particularly in rehabilitated brownstones used for public housing. I will also seek means to encourage landlords to create small backyard parks on their own.

#### 4. Rooftop parks and playgrounds

There are miles of spaces on rooftops that can be used for playgrounds developed imaginatively—rooftops of private dwellings, Housing Authority projects, and piers.

#### 5. Special Play Areas in Large Parks

(a) I intend to create new playgrounds and redecorate old ones in a fresh and imaginative manner.

(b) Benches, in particular, need to be rehabilitated. New benches might be available cheap from the World's Fair.

#### 6. Adventure Playgrounds

(a) These playgrounds have recently captured the imagination of some few forward-looking individuals in this country. They are a relatively old concept in Europe. In contrast to the traditional asphalt surfacing and immovable slides, swings, seesaws, and jungle gyms of playgrounds as we know them all over the city, the adventure playground is built upon almost any available site, anywhere in size from a quarter acre to an acre and a half. If the terrain has slope, so much the better.

(b) A typical adventure playground is designed to accommodate children from toddler age through the late teens, depending on neighborhood needs, and, ideally, is built by the older children under the supervision of an adult (much the same way the HANA-sponsored vest-pocket playgrounds are being built in Harlem today).

(c) The playground should have a simple shelter in which the smaller children can play in inclement weather and where tools and movable equipment can be stored at night, and with lavatory facilities.

(d) There should be an area for the small children and their mothers, which could have a wading pool, benches, and play sculpture.

(e) Then comes the adventure section. This is where, with lumber, nails, ropes, and bricks, swings and slides and climbing structures can be built and rebuilt by the older children, and often, as in the European playgrounds, used by the younger children—at the invitation and encouragement of their older playmates.

(f) This type of activity has been shown to develop in the children an intensified sense of community—of working together, working for others, and building for those less able (the younger ones). This same activity inspires independence, courage, and initiative.

(g) Surveys taken in the neighborhoods of adventure playgrounds in Europe showed a *decline* in juvenile delinquency, and in some areas, its complete absence.

(h) Basic to the success of an adventure playground is *supervision*—for the adventure area and for indoor recreation. I want to enlist students of education, physical education, and child psychology in the City University for these positions.

(i) Accidents are proven to be less frequent here than in traditional playgrounds. Because of this, and because of the presence of supervisors for the adventure areas, in England the insurance rates are *lower* for adventure than for conventional playgrounds.

## 7. Parks in Commercial Areas

(a) There are too few parks of small size convenient to the shopper and office worker and designed for their needs. We have not kept pace with increased concentrations of population in the business and commercial districts.

(b) The midtown park or the park of a business area should be "a pool of space removed from the flow of traffic—even pedestrian traffic; an outdoor living room, human in scale, enclosed and protected, and sheltered from noise."

(c) Its walls should be the walls of the surrounding buildings. The ceiling should be a dense canopy of leaves formed by the close planting of trees twelve to fifteen feet apart. This type of park is necessarily small—even as small as fifty by one hundred feet. Its furniture should include the single chair, light and portable. It should be fenced so that it can be locked at night. It might even have colorful refreshment stands housing vending machines for sandwiches and coffee. There is no need for lawns and flower beds that need constant care.

## 8. Recreation piers, Waterfront Parks, and Floating Swimming Pools

(a) The commercial decay of the New York piers must be turned into recreational bounty. I have proposed a series of recreational piers transformed into small gardens or community centers where music can be performed. Restaurants are also desirable. I want to create a series of semi-temporary parks and recreation facilities on barges. These would be placed in clusters, some affording swimming pools similar to those found in Europe—on the Seine in Paris, for example—others with space for dance areas and inexpensive restaurants. These barges, of which there are a number now in storage, would be linked together by a series of attractive gangways.

(b) The floating swimming pools anchored in the rivers would help solve the lack of this important type of facility, particularly in slum areas. The estimated cost for a large floating pool with one large pool for adults and two smaller pools for children would range from \$1.6 million to \$1.8 million. It is quite possible that the pools could be constructed with federal funds.

(c) In addition, I hope to utilize some of the space between certain piers up to the edge of the pierfront by filling in the area.

(d) Thought should also be given to whether other types of moth-ball craft could be used for recreation purposes. Sam Houston park in Texas makes use of one vessel as a new type of park.

(e) There would be no land costs for these projects as we would utilize some of the 560 miles of waterfront that is now wholly wasted.

## 9. Indoor Recreation Facilities, particularly in Slums

(a) The great pastoral spaces in the City devoted to rural pleasures were the major contribution of the nineteenth century to the park system. At that time parks were designed to "eradicate even the faintest trace of urban activity."

(b) Such a strict concept of park and recreation planning is out of touch with some current desires and needs. The inhabitants of many of the City's slum areas want certain purely urban recreation facilities as much as they want a place to walk or relax on the grass.

(c) Studies undertaken by such groups as the Park Association and Architects Renewal Committee in Harlem have shown that one of the most sought-after facilities in Harlem is an indoor recreation center, air-conditioned, with a swimming pool (some with removable roofs), basketball courts, and rooms for card playing and conversation. Also areas with *shelters* in existing parks are needed.

(d) I will place high priority on more indoor recreation facilities for slum areas.

## **II. TO DERIVE MAXIMUM BENEFIT FROM OUR EXISTING PARKS AND BRING THEM UP TO TODAY'S STANDARDS WE NEED:**

### **1. More maintenance personnel**

(a) Owing to the Democratic Administration's constant failure to give the Park Department a proper share of the Capital and Expense Budget, the city's parks are among the most poorly maintained in the entire United States. The decayed and filthy condition of an appalling number of the city's parks has been a matter of discussion in the metropolitan press for years.

(b) The Park Department has an insufficient number of maintenance men, and they are inadequately trained. They also receive insufficient pay. The Sanitation Department's workers receive salaries that are 20% to 30% higher than the Park Department's maintenance workers, many of whom perform similar tasks.

### **2. An In-Service Training Program**

(a) The refusal on the part of the City to grant funds for training programs has led to a situation of crisis. In recent times, already overworked Park Department officials conducted a twelve-week in-service training course for over 1,200 park foremen. But improvised stop-gap training programs are not the answer.

(b) The Park and Recreation Department needs to form a separate division to give adequate in-service training. This division would consist of an officer and a staff of five to seven, to be responsible for training all categories of the Department's employees: stenographic, clerical, maintenance, and recreation workers.

(c) The present Park Department has consistently requested in-service training funds and organization. It has been consistently turned down by the Board of Estimate, of which Mr. Beame was a key member.

### **3. Effective Power to Halt Widespread Littering and Vandalism**

(a) Park officials now do not have the power to issue summonses to the people who abuse our parks with litter and garbage. Litterbugs should not go unpunished in the parks any more than in the streets. It is unrealistic to expect the police, who are the only ones who now have the summons power in the parks, to divert their energies from providing security to providing maintenance. Special forces of personnel might be deployed to protect the vast majority of our residents who take care of our parks from the few who deface, litter, and vandalize. At one time the Park Department did have a force that could issue summonses; I want to have the Commissioner of the Department of Parks and Recreation see if this measure of protection can be re-introduced.

(b) Unskilled labor must be enlisted from the Poverty Program for park operations. This can be done with proper organization from: 1) the Neighborhood Youth Corps; 2) the Summer Youth Program. In addition the Community Action Program can be tapped.

(c) This year about 1,000 youths have worked with the Park Department for twelve weeks, mostly in maintenance. This year's program has been visibly more successful than last year's. In future summers even better organization, an even more efficient system of weeding out those not capable of doing the work and even more adequate supervision can lead to far more rewarding results.

### **4. Greater Police Protection**

(a) The appalling amount of crime in New York City's parks is one of the major problems confronting the next Mayor. I have been told that there is no solution to the problem, no way to

make a safer New York City, no way to cut down drastically on the muggings, rapes, robberies, murders, and thefts, no way to wipe from the grim slate of the "twelve most feared parks in the United States" the nine from New York City.

But there is a way. Recent effort—as yet not sufficient—on the part of the Police Department to add patrols to the parks and to begin a scooter patrol has cut down on the crime rate. The incidence of muggings in Central Park alone has dropped nearly 30%. *But much more needs to be done.*

(b) Specifically, I shall add more lights; I shall enlarge the number of patrols, foot, scooter, and mounted. We have 35,859 acres of park land in our city, making nearly 17.3% of the total acreage, yet we have only 59 scooters. We need at least four times that amount. I will also insist on the installation in parks of thousands of emergency telephone boxes with direct links to a central Police Department communications center. I shall also study the use of police aides and internes for park patrol.

(c) All this is not to say that police protection and surveillance need unduly restrict the maximum enjoyment of our parks. Two recent instances point out that a greater degree of discretion on the part of our police can assure best use of park areas: in one instance, a well-known mandolin player was forcibly evicted from Washington Square for refusing to play in a designated area at a designated time; in another case, a student was arraigned for strolling by the Soldiers and Sailors Monument after midnight. The latter instance was, in fact, a violation of Park Department Rules and Regulations, which restricts use of parks between midnight and one half-hour before sunrise. (Department of Parks Rules and Regulations. Article 3, Section 34.) There are some park areas where this regulation exists, unfortunately, to the public's benefit. But there are other parks, plazas and public areas that can—and should be—enjoyed at any time when a citizen's safety is obviously not threatened.

We are fortunate to have in our City a national landmark such as Washington Square. Unless the spontaneous assembly that gives this public area so much color and life becomes a clear public hazard, we should avoid restricting its use—from the purpose for which it was created. Rather, I think such activities should be encouraged.

## **5. Strict controls against encroachment upon park land**

(a) If every plan to encroach upon Central Park proposed in the past fifty years—a racetrack for noisy vehicles, auditoriums, restaurants, pavilions, Cathedral for all Faiths, the replica of the World War I trenches at Verdun—had been carried through, there would today be absolutely no green space at all in its 846 acres.

Encroachment upon our precious park land is one of the most serious threats to our open-space inventory that exists.

(b) Not a year goes by without either direct encroachment upon park land by another agency or the serious consideration of such encroachment. Citizens groups interested in the preservation of our park lands find themselves often powerless to stop a 'blitzkrieg' attack by the Traffic Department to construct a garage under a park or special legislation proposed in Albany for a garage for the Sanitation Department.

(c) Although I realize that in some instances there is a legitimate reason to use park land for such projects as a community center, a swimming pool, or a new zoo, I am opposed to encroachment upon park land. I will establish organization procedures (outlined in Part B, IV, 1-4) to make encroachment practically impossible.

## **6. Improved Access to Certain Parks Now Blocked Off by Water, Highway and Rail**

(a) Certain parks are virtually inaccessible to the majority of the public, owing to the insurmountable barriers between them and the residential areas of the city. An excellent example of a park with poor access is the open space along the Hudson River between the bank and the Henry Hudson Parkway. From 79th Street to 158th Street there are no more than four access routes. Anybody



who has driven along the highway has had on numerous occasions the frightening experience of having to avoid groups of children darting across the six lanes of speedway (where the speed limit is now fifty miles per hour). There must be many more footbridges over the highway so that this narrow strip of park will become more accessible to the many citizens who seek to enjoy it.

(b) I will study the problem of access and supply new means of access where they are needed.

## **7. Water Pollution Control**

(a) In order to make recreation piers and waterfront parks truly usable we must rid the rivers of the stinking pollution that now holds it in a death grip.

(b) I have made a statement regarding the problem of water pollution and have made a number of proposals to begin to cure the disease. These proposals include more treatment plants, the transformation of the combined sewage system into two separate systems for raw sewage and storm water drain-off, and until the separate systems are built, interceptor sewers.

(c) We must face up to the fact that the purification of the river waters in New York will take decades. Instant results are impossible, at least with those facilities for treatment known at the present.

## **8. A Review of Park Concessions**

(a) It is high time that the concessions in parks, particularly for restaurants were reviewed. There are abundant complaints from New York City citizens about certain concessions where the food is terrible and the service third-rate. The restaurant in Fort Tryon Park, for example, is a typical example of a recreation facility that the City Administration believes is hidden enough to ignore. Yet it is the only restaurant that serves the more than 1,250,000 visitors a year to The Cloisters, many of whom are foreigners. Thus its abysmal quality is known not only throughout New York City but throughout the world.

(b) The Mayor's office, through the Park Commissioner can insist that the holders of such concessions maintain cleanliness and good standards of food and service or award the concession to another restaurant.

(c) It is ironic that the Park Department argues so hard for the new Huntington Hartford Restaurant—which has been opposed by every major civic group interested in the preservation and beauty of one of the great naturalistic parks in the United States—and yet demonstrates a total disregard for the quality of a restaurant already in existence.

## **9. Safer Playground Equipment**

(a) One of the major complaints from mothers is that not enough safety precautions have been taken in playground equipment and in the surfacing of pavement under swings, slides, and seesaws. I will start work immediately to make present playgrounds safer and take the necessary steps to make new equipment come up to modern standards of safety.

(b) In the meantime, I suggest that the Park Department begin to repair the torn-up equipment, the decayed benches, and the fences so ripped apart that they are like barbed wire found in many of the city's playgrounds.

## **10. Encouragement of Private Support for Special Events and Recreation Activities**

### **III. TO EXPLOIT TO THE FULLEST THE ADVANTAGES OF AREAS OF UNIQUE QUALITY WE MUST:**

#### **1. Develop the Waterfront and Shorefront**

I will create recreation piers, floating parks, playgrounds and pools; waterside restaurants; public pleasure boats; beaches; marinas as outlined in section I, 8 above.

## **2. Develop Systems of Recreation Transportation**

(a) I will think in terms of recreation transportation such as greater use of ferries on both rivers, and linking the East River islands. The use of hydrofoil boats as commutation vessels must be further investigated. With reasonable rates the city could use the large Supramar type of hydrofoil that regularly carries 150 passengers across the Straits of Messina.

(b) And use of large ferries on rivers similar to the Hudson Day Line.

## **3. Acquire and Enhance the Beauty of Open-Space in Green-belt Areas; Establish Cluster Zoning for Housing Developments Where Applicable; Create and Preserve Nature Trails and Conservation Facilities**

## **4. Establish Free or Subsidized Transportation to Parks**

(a) I will make transportation to parks more convenient. We must think in terms of broadening present Transit Authority policies to allow children to receive passes not only on weekdays but weekends as well on both surface and sub-surface transportation.

(b) Fares should also be reduced for the elderly on off-rush hours.

# **IV. TO BRING ABOUT A BETTER BALANCE OF RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES IN EACH BOROUGH WE MUST:**

## **1. Correct the Inter-Borough Imbalance Particularly in the Bad Distribution of Small Parks and Such Facilities as Swimming Pools and Tennis Courts**

(a) The city has mapped 37,700 acres of public space for recreation purposes. New York City holds almost 17.3% of its land for recreation use. Statistics, however, can be misleading and lifeless. The important point is the *distribution* of park land in relation to the recreation needs of the people. When you look at the problem in this manner a number of startling facts come to light. Of the total acreage, 9,000 are now under water. 6,000 acres consist of Jamaica Bay. Although much of this space is usable for boating, the dangerous amount of pollution makes the area wholly unsafe for swimming. In addition many of the largest parks are either undeveloped or semi-developed. Many parks have been allowed to fall into such wretched states of disrepair or have become so dangerous that the citizens do not want to visit them. In short, parks although of large acreage are often not where the people are.

(b) The amount of park land which is part of the immediate environment is about 14,500 acres at the most. This is roughly 7% of the City's area.

(c) When a study is made to determine where the park land is it becomes even clearer that something is wrong. In 1963, the Community Council of Greater New York divided the city into 74 defined communities. It discovered that only 9 of the 74 areas contained over 53% of the total park land and outdoor recreation acreage.

(d) The study also pointed out that the number of playgrounds in any one area is not related to the population of that area. One example is particularly vivid: Riverdale and Tremont in the Bronx possess twelve playgrounds each. Tremont has approximately 25,000 youths to Riverdale's 8,500.

## **V. TO PROMOTE OVER-ALL BEAUTIFICATION OF THE CITY WE MUST:**

1. Press to continue the idea of a Mayor's Conference on Urban Beauty and recommend that the \$175,000 Recreation and Open Space Study will deal significantly with the problems of beautification.
2. Check the continued threats to New York City's aesthetic and historic heritage.
3. Preserve as much open land as is compatible with the city's needs for growth and redevelopment.
4. Assure high standards of design and embellishment.
5. Encourage active citizen participation in the task of making the city more beautiful.

## **THE MEANS OF ACHIEVING THESE FIVE MAJOR GOALS**

### **I. REVISION AND ENLARGEMENT OF THE PRESENT PARK DEPARTMENT**

1. The new Department to be renamed the Department of Parks and Recreation will be charged with a leading role in establishing new recreation programs and in *coordinating* the recreation programs of other City Departments—the Boards of Education and Higher Education; the Departments of Correction, Education, Parks, Health, Hospitals, Police and Welfare; the Housing Authority; the Public Library; the City Museums; the Youth Board. There will be a landscape architect for parks and equally important, a specialist for recreation as Deputy Commissioners.

(a) That is not to say that the Department of Parks and Recreation will direct the programs of the other Departments. It will be the primary coordinating Agency to halt unwarranted duplication.

### **II. A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR PARKS AND RECREATION**

1. I will start at once the creation of a multi-faceted comprehensive guide plan for parks and recreation to be conducted by the City Planning Commission in conjunction with the new Parks and Recreation Department and based upon the findings of the new \$175,000 Study. The plan will account not only for land and facilities but for basic, community by community recreation needs.
2. One of the duties of those responsible for making up the comprehensive guide plan for open space will be to investigate the feasibility of a municipal advance land acquisition program similar to the Land Bank proposed in 1961 but never carried out by Mayor Wagner.

(a) This must be done particularly with the amount of city-owned vacant land, which according to Roger Starr is:

“a resource to be conserved and managed in much the same way that the trustees of the city's pension funds manage the accumulated moneys. A means must be found to entrust the city land management including, but not limited to, the development of the city's own portfolio of owned land, to a special board of trustees . . . whose members would include the Commissioner of Real Estate, the City Planning Commission and the Commissioner of Parks.”

(b) I will check the rapid rate by which the city sells its own land to bring it back to the tax rolls. Unless a way is found the present irresponsible pattern of waste and lack of concern will certainly continue.

(c) Although research is of vital importance in this task, I am sure that certain projects can

begin right away, namely, slum recreation projects, indoor facilities, the development of certain streets as recreation areas, the building of certain Adventure playgrounds at far lower cost than the asphalt and concrete "swing, slide, and sandbox" stereotypes.

(d) The comprehensive guide plan must not be inflexible; it must live and breathe in the atmosphere of changing community environments.

(i) *This plan must proceed from a statement of goals with a timetable established to meet those goals. I want the concepts, ideas and designs to be aired publicly and approved by a board of the best architects, landscape architects, playground designers, and city planners available in the nation.*

### III. NEW DESIGN PROGRAMS

1. It has become apparent that the Design section of the Park Department has difficulty (owing to lack of funds) in keeping up with new creative ideas and concepts in the planning of parks, playgrounds and other facilities. A number of prominent architects complain that design policies have for many years been guided by too-rigid standards to make parks and playgrounds most easily maintained.

(a) One study of new standards is presently under way. I approve of this. But a mere replacement of old rigid standards by new specifications does not get to the roots of the problem, as the group charged with the study fully recognizes.

(b) I recognize that it was the *scope* and *excellence* and *creativity* of the design that made the nucleus of the city's park system so great when it was constructed a hundred years ago.

(c) I also recognize that parks have no reason to be conservative or stereotyped or dull. An attitude of creativity and experimentation must be the underlying feeling in the design section of the Park Department, not only among the younger designers. After all the Park Department more than any other city agency deals with creative ideas.

2. I will direct my Park and Recreation Department Commissioner to reorganize the Design section to be headed by an architect or landscape architect who will bring back to park operations a greater opportunity for imagination, taste and creative design.

(a) In addition, I am going to form an architectural advisory group to deal with proposals of design and restoration specifically relating to parks.

### IV. THE POWER OF THOSE AGENCIES THAT OUGHT TO HAVE LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY IN FORMULATING AND CARRYING THROUGH PROGRAMS OF PRESERVATION AND BEAUTIFICATION MUST BE STRENGTHENED.

#### 1. The City Planning Commission

(a) At least one member of the Commission *plus an adequate staff* must be directly assigned parks as a specialty.

(b) The City Planning Commission *should* have the right to decide whether or not a parking garage for trucks or automobiles should be constructed under any of the city's parks.

(c) It is to be noted that the representative of Mr. Beame, following his instructions, voted recently against giving the City Planning Commission this right

(d) As Budget Director, on June 15, 1956, Mr. Beame proposed to the Board of Estimate that any plans for a downtown park near the Municipal Court Building on the site bounded by Franklin, Centre, Lafayette and White Streets be *scrapped* and the site turned over to the Traffic

Department for a 600 car parking garage.

## **2. The Landmarks Preservation Commission**

I will broaden the authority of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to have jurisdiction not only over certain architectural landmarks in parks such as the Boathouse in Prospect Park, but over *land* itself as a landmark. This would make encroachments such as the Huntington Hartford Cafe practically impossible.

## **3. The Art Commission**

(a) I will ensure that the membership of the Art Commission is broadened to include those individuals who are in tune with contemporary ideas of sculpture and design.

(b) I will hold public hearings on the decisions of the Art Commission.

## **4. Park Curators**

(a) Prospect Park and Central Park are two of the finest naturalistic and pastoral manmade parks in the entire United States and should be preserved in their original design as far as possible.

(b) I plan to establish Curators who would "keep" these historic monuments, and would act just as a curator in a great art or science or natural history museum. The Curators of Prospect and Central will be individuals who live near these parks, who know every part of each park's history, development and design. They will advise me and the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation and will be granted a token salary with expenses. Their duties will include watching the condition of the historic elements and structures of the parks and studying the proper means of maintenance and restoration of old buildings if that becomes a matter of necessity. The curators will also be charged with the preparation of guidebooks or manuals for the parks to be published by the City and sold throughout the parks so that the countless citizens from here and abroad will know the history and interest of the fine features and ideas that went into the creation of the parks.

## **V. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

1. One of the most frequently heard complaints through the city is: "You have to make virtual war on the Arsenal just to be heard once. And it is always the local group that shouts the longest and the hardest that gets what it wants. This means of recognition is not fair."

(a) Clearly the Parks and Recreation Department must have an office for community liaison. That office will conduct business at hours when citizens can fully participate, i.e., after five in the evening. It will also coordinate with the neighborhood offices of the Mayor which I have proposed.

(b) The office of community liaison in the Parks and Recreation Department will have at least five representatives of all community groups, one from each borough, so that each group can be informed of each plan and the relationship of each community plan to the overall planning of the Parks and Recreation Department.

(i) Since the very definition of the city's park system is that parks are eminently the possession of the people, the Department must actively and constantly deal closely with the people. It must get news to the people, and above all attempt to enlist citizen aid—in ideas, plans, and even designs. The impression one gets from the citizenry is that today the Park Department is "on the defensive" or even "secretive." The reason for this is clear: the Department has so long been held back by the Administration that it has developed a watchful attitude. The attitude of the Department must be the opposite—open and creative—since it deals with public projects of a highly creative nature. I will encourage and guide that attitude.

(c) I will direct the Park Department to consider competitions of design by local citizens. Is

the stereotyped "asphalt prison" type playgrounds apparent throughout the city so hallowed in design that we cannot grant local citizens the right to plant flowers in boxes? Under present policies it is difficult to gain permission from the Park Department to enact spot beautification of certain parks by putting in flower pots even for such institutions as the Girl Scouts, who were forced to carry on an extended campaign to get permission to plant flower urns in Prospect Park at the Grand Army Plaza entrance. That is not my idea of how to create community participation. The well-known story, published in *The New York Times*, of the Park Department superintendent praised by local parents for having permitted children to grow flowers and plants and was subsequently brought up on charges of unauthorized activities by the Park Department, is a vivid illustration of current over-protective and unrealistic policies.

(i) I will begin a strong campaign to enact spot beautification of the city by window boxes, trees, etc. This would be accompanied by limited city aid for those community groups who want to make their neighborhoods more attractive.

2. Local Park and Recreation Boards should be encouraged whenever possible.
3. Assistance from outside architects, landscape architects, and playground designers should be even more encouraged than it is at present.

(a) To establish this I will see whether or not the present fee structure for outside architects can be changed. Presently the fees are 4% for plans and 4% for supervision. This is way below A. I. A. standards. It is at a point where firms with established reputations will not accept the work. It is also at a point where younger architects who desire to work on park and playground projects simply cannot afford to work even when willing to cut profits to a bare minimum or accept no profit at all. I will look into the possibility of raising architects' fees to the more realistic figure of 6% for plans and 4% for supervision.

## VI. THE PARK BUDGET

1. A great system of clean, safe parks, distributed throughout every community of the City, and a recreation program of far greater scope than that presently existing will cost money.

(a) According to the City Planning Commission, well over \$500 million for the further acquisition, development and reconstruction of open space is needed for New York City in the next decade.

(i) The City Planning Commission has determined by a survey of local, state and federal resources, that only around \$220 million may become available. The gap of \$280 million means that major recreation needs of the City's population will not be met. A program must be initiated to obtain a great deal more money from the state and federal governments—especially from the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation of the Department of the Interior.

(ii) *This means new state and federal legislation must be enacted and I will fight to see that it is.*

2. Under my leadership the Department of Parks and Recreation will have the following Budget:

### (a) Capital Budget

(i) This year the Park Department received \$22 million. The Capital Budget will have to be raised in the future, subject to the debt limit, if the current recreation needs of New York City are to be met. About \$3 million more per year will be necessary. In addition, a greater proportion of the Capital Budget and practically all of the \$3 million increase will have to be given over to the reconstruction of existing parks that have fallen into disgraceful states of deterioration.

### (b) Expense Budget

(i) In 1964-65, the Department of Parks presented an expense budget of \$45 million. This was considered the *bare minimum* to maintain the work of the Park Department at its previous level.

(ii) The Board of Estimate reduced this figure by \$2,103,000. This meant: a halt in the hiring of vitally needed new personnel, particularly recreation leaders; seasonal maintenance workers were put on a five-day instead of the previous six-day week; the Design and Engineering Division, already way behind, found itself unable to process plans with the result that the rate of commitment of capital funds for the Park Department is well behind other departments.

(iii) The expense budget must be raised in the future. The figure should probably be as much as \$48 million, plus supplementary allocations. We must consider as the highest priority the repair and maintenance of the hundreds of parks and playgrounds that are dirty, in disrepair and dangerous.

### (c) State and Federal Programs

(i) One of the primary tasks of my Parks and Recreation Commissioner will be to seek constantly for funds from state, federal, private, foundation, institution and other sources.

(ii) In recent years it appears that the absence of a coordinated policy on the part of the present administration cost the taxpayers a considerable amount of money.

(iii) The New York State Council of Parks has recently prepared a ten-year, \$400 million recreation development plan for the entire state. (Half of this will be provided through a new \$200 million bond issue, which will come before the voters in 1966. Another \$75 million will come from the state capital budget at the rate of \$7.5 million per year. Of the \$90 million federal share, \$65 million will come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and \$25 million from the Harbors of Refuge Program. The remaining \$35 million will be supplied by local governments.) Through this plan, New York City, when application is made, will get a direct total minimum of \$50 million—if the city is willing to contribute \$12.5 million to that total. An additional \$50 million will be available to New York City and its service areas for development of marine facilities, again with 25% coming from local funds; and \$10 million for historic sites. \$80 million will be allocated to state parks in the service area of the city. (Traditionally there have been no state parks within New York City or any other city of the state, except for Niagara Falls in Niagara.)

(iv) All told, New York City and its environs (Nassau, Suffolk, Westchester) will benefit from roughly \$190 million (\$25 million of which must be put up locally) of the \$400 million program. There is the possibility that the present allocations will be reconsidered and that the city may—if the Mayor exerts all the influence he can—receive more in direct aid.

(v) *Of crucial importance is that the amount of money New York receives from the \$400 million State program and Title VIII of the Housing Act will be determined in large part by how hard the City fights for it.* I will fight for these moneys that are so badly needed for the recreation needs of New York City's citizens. In order to do this I will investigate all federal programs to see if they can serve the city's needs through an office of the Mayor in Washington.

(vi) When a fight is not made the results are depressing. For example the city *could* have received well over \$5 million from Title VII funds of the Housing Act. *But only \$1 million was requested.*

(vii) Under Title VIII of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1965, the federal government will supply 50% not only of the cost of acquisition of open spaces but also an equal percentage of the cost of development of lands acquired with federal funds. My administration will see that New York City receives its *full* share of all of these programs.

#### **(d) Private Donors**

The practice of recent years of the City accepting a contribution of funds from private citizens, which funds would be matched by the City, has not been as successful as first hoped.

(i) The City's share of the Loula Lasker Memorial Rink will cost a great deal more than half the total cost. The donor's share was \$600,000. The Park Commissioner estimates that the final cost will be \$1.7 million.

(ii) Appealing though it may be to receive what seems at the moment to be a large sum of private money for public works, I intend to scrutinize this practice with great care. If a project is undertaken, it is imperative that it be a new, exciting, worthwhile addition to a barren area and not an encroachment on an existing park.

(iii) I am now looking into whether or not funds from foundations might apply to certain park and recreation projects. For example, a one-building lot sitting park or vest pocket park can cost as little as \$10,000. Foundation money might be available for such projects.

(iv) I will study a program of funds for memorial tree-planting from non-wealthy citizens.

#### **(e) Transfer of Funds, Lands and Services**

(i) I will see what funds, lands and services are available to the Park Department outside of its budget. I will start the search through City records to obtain unused lands formerly taken over for nonpayment of taxes or for acquisition of schools never built.

### **Proposals**

In almost every Mayoralty campaign in New York City over the past one hundred years an impassioned statement was made by every candidate, calling for a sweeping reform of the city's parks. Most of the time the ideas, many of them of great promise, were forgotten soon after the election. Too often the recognition that our parks and open spaces are vitally important for the well-being of the people and the health of the city's economy has come only at election time and then disappeared. Too often the bold promises to create a plan for parks and recreation have delivered nothing. Too long have the city's parks and open spaces been considered luxuries to be thought about last or, worse, as a mine of available land to be transformed into garages or sold indiscriminately to building speculators to give short-term profit to the city budget.

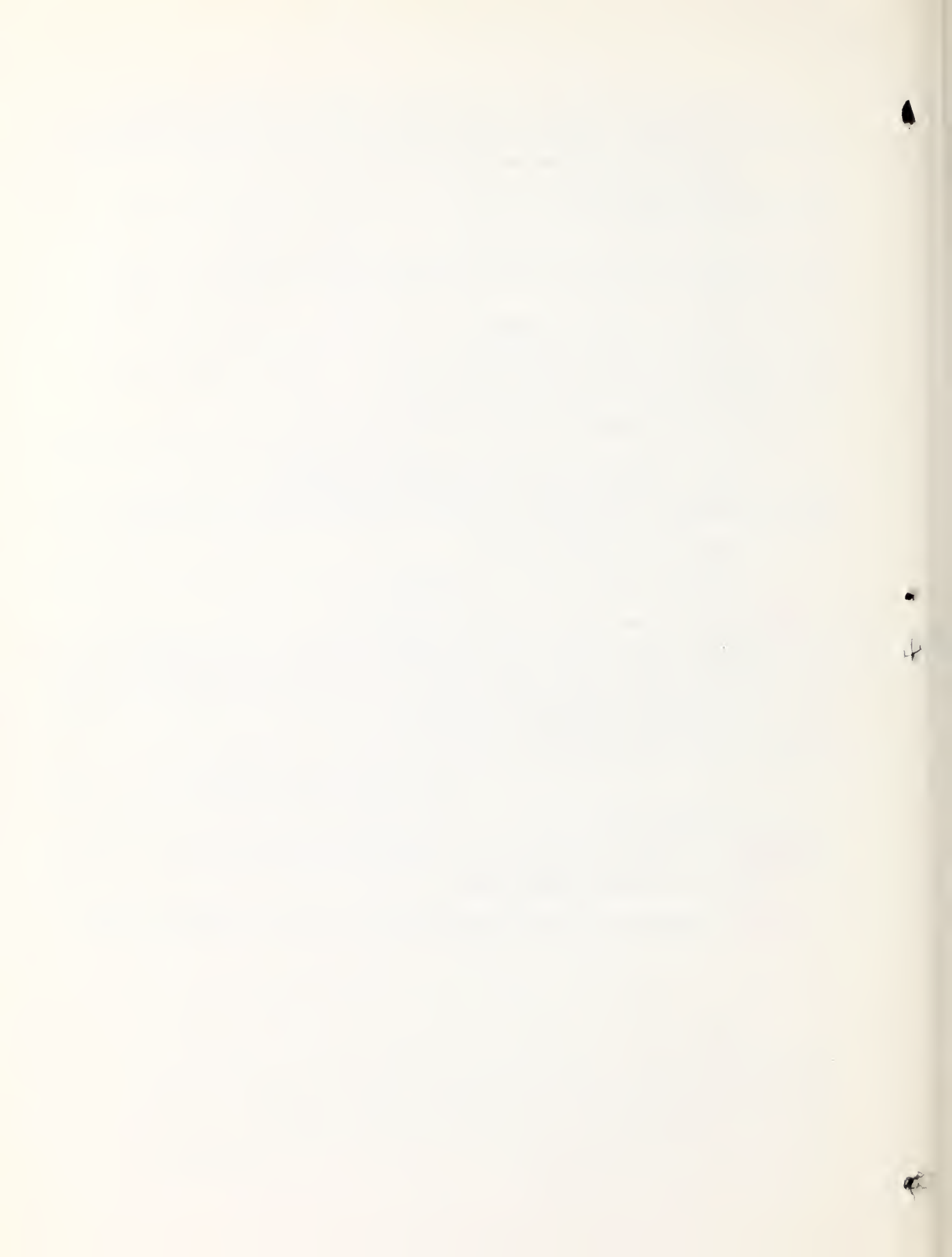
The ideas expressed in this paper make it clear that by my leadership I intend to bring about a Renaissance of Parks and the manifold recreation projects associated with parks. My intention is to make New York City again the leader of the nation in park and recreation development. I will do this with the aid and advice of those who have forcible, imaginative ideas and far-reaching visions.

#### **The major points of my park and recreation program are as follows:**

1. Put new parks where the people are, particularly in slum areas.
2. Bring existing parks up from decay to high standards of maintenance.
3. Exploit and enhance those areas of unique opportunity such as the waterfront.
4. Create dozens of small parks throughout every neighborhood: small sitting parks; temporary small parks; backyard parks; rooftop parks; adventure playgrounds; parks in commercial and business areas; recreation piers; floating swimming pools.
5. Create recreation buildings with indoor facilities such as basketball courts, card rooms, television halls.



6. Maintain our parks with more personnel, better trained, better paid.
7. Give the Parks and Recreation Department the power to halt widespread littering and vandalism by a special park force which can issue summonses.
8. Greater police protection.
9. Strict controls against encroachment.
10. Improve access to parks now blocked off by roads, rail and water.
11. Control water pollution.
12. Make safer playground equipment.
13. Review concessions of park restaurants.
14. Develop systems of recreation transportation.
15. Establish programs for the over-all beautification of the city.
16. Revise and enlarge the present park department with a greater emphasis on recreation in mind. Rename it the Parks and Recreation Department.
17. Formulate a comprehensive plan for parks and recreation based on the \$175,000 Study.
18. Embark upon new design programs.
19. Reorganize present Design section of the Park Department to be headed by an architect or landscape architect.
20. Strengthen the role of the City Planning Commission.
21. Broaden powers of the Landmarks Preservation Commission to include park *land*.
22. Establish Curators for Central and Prospect Parks and charge them with the preparation of guidebooks for these historic park landmarks.
23. Encourage citizen participation of all kinds.
24. Make a community liaison office to make convenient contact with the people.
25. Encourage outside architects and landscape architects and playground designers with a better fee structure.
26. Raise the Capital Budget allocations for Parks and Recreation Department.
27. Raise the Expense Budget allocations.
28. Pressure for new State and Federal funds for Parks and Recreation Department projects— not only for acquisition but for maintenance.



S U P P L E M E N T

October 8, 1965

**Borough by Borough Analysis of New York City's Parks**

The Lindsay staff has investigated more than 200 of New York City's parks, benches, and areas that offer special opportunities for future recreational development.

The following is a critical analysis, Borough by Borough, of more than fifty of those areas. In each case there is an analysis of existing conditions and various recommendations on what steps can be taken to make the parks more useful and more attractive to the people of New York City.

I. THE BRONX

A. *Large Parks*

B. *Neighborhood Parks*

C. *Specific Parks*

1. St. James Park
2. Botanical Gardens
3. Claremont Park
4. Crotona Park
5. John Mullaley Park
6. Pugsley Creek Area

II. BROOKLYN

A. *Distribution of Parks*

B. *Specific Parks*

1. Barry Park
2. Fort Greene Park
3. Carroll Park
4. Cobble Hill Park
5. Brower Park
6. Marine Park
7. Third Street Park
8. Fort Hamilton Park
9. Prospect Park

III. MANHATTAN

I. *Some Specific Parks*

1. Inwood Hill Park
2. Inwood Marina Area

3. Fort Tryon Park
4. Bennett Park
5. John Hood Wright Park
6. High Bridge Park
7. Area between High Bridge and J. Hood Wright Park
8. Colonial Park
9. Colonial Charles Young Park
10. Mount Morris Park
11. Morningside Park
12. Thomas Jefferson Park
13. Area North of 110th Street
14. Riverside Park
15. DeWitt Clinton Park
16. Chelsea Park
17. Madison Square Park
18. Washington Square Park
19. James J. Walker Park
20. Midtown Manhattan
21. Central Park

#### IV. QUEENS

1. Flushing Meadows
2. Alley Pond Park
3. Willets Point Park

#### V. RICHMOND

##### A. *Comprehensive Plans*

##### B. *Specific Areas*

1. Stapleton
2. Camp High Rock
3. The "Green Belt"
4. Great Kills Park
5. South Shore and Richmond Country Clubs
6. Wolfe's Pond Park
7. Annadale

#### VI. BEACHES, ISLANDS, AND WATERFRONTS

##### A. *Waterfront Uses*

## B. *Specific Areas*

1. Welfare Island
2. The Bronx
3. Randalls and Wards Islands
4. Rockaways and Breezy Point
5. Coney Island
6. Manhattan
7. High-Priority Opportunities
8. Low-Priority Opportunities
9. Swinburne and Hoffman Islands

## I. **The Bronx**

### A. **Large Parks**

The Bronx offers some of the most extensive and best large parks in the City and there are no critical problems relating to them other than that of maintenance. But access is often difficult for citizens who do not have automobiles. The very lure of such great open spaces such as Van Cortlandt Park, Orchard Beach, and Pelham Bay leads to frustration for those who cannot find means to get to them. Accordingly, I favored reduced-rate transportation via busses and subways not only during the week but over weekends as well to allow children greater opportunity and access to these parks and beaches.

### B. **Neighborhood Parks**

The most severe park problem in the Bronx is the depressing lack of small, neighborhood recreation areas within slum pockets in certain parts of Tremont, Morrisania, Melrose and Mott Haven.

Serving parts of Melrose and Mott Haven is one excellent park, with a community center equipped with a wide range of facilities, including an indoor swimming pool, a gym, a cooking school, a small theater for movies and a woodworking and carpentry shop. This fine center, in St. Mary's Park, is the only one in the entire Bronx. The staff here is doing an excellent job with the youth of the neighborhood and should become a model in plan for a number of similar activities and facilities. The recreation staff of St. Mary's, cut from twelve to eight when the Park Department was forced on its present austerity basis, cannot handle the tremendous need of the vast area of the Bronx that it serves. This staff must be brought back to twelve and further enlarged if necessary.

The popularity of St. Mary's goes beyond the Bronx, as a member of the recreation staff pointed out. People from all over New York City come to swim and play and take part in creative activities. The contribution of St. Mary's is invaluable to the community and the City. We need at least five more centers like this in the Bronx alone.

### C. **Specific Parks**

#### 1. *St. James Park*

St. James Park is in a bad state of repair. Benches are knocked over and shattered and the trees need repair. There is litter everywhere, which is removed only sporadically, despite the complaints to the Park Department by a number of citizens.

## 2. *Botanical Gardens*

In former years this Garden was one of the most beautiful and well kept in the entire nation; recently however, there is a growing incidence of heavy vandalism. A greater security system is obviously needed, and more money for the rehabilitation of those parts that are falling into decay.

## 3. *Claremont Park*

This park, too, suffers from lack of maintenance—there is considerable erosion of land, and the trees are in bad condition.

## 4. *Crotona Park*

This park is number *nine* in a nationwide survey of the twelve most feared parks. Crotona needs a general reconstruction of all its elements—including the swimming pool, which the City has already slated for major repair. Greater police protection against crime and vandalism is a pressing necessity.

## 5. *John Mullaley Park*

This park offers a wide range of recreation facilities. The supervisors have been effective in their duties this past summer. The tennis courts have been recently overhauled. Work is needed however, on the asphalt playground and ball field; in these parts there is a considerable amount of badly cracked and deteriorated paving. The wooded hill on the west side of the park has been allowed to decay to a dangerous point. The soil is heavily eroded and the trees are in some danger. This western part of Mullaley Park would be an ideal place for an adventure playground.

## 6. *Pugsley Creek*

The land on both sides of Pugsley Creek is an exciting area for a park. There are more than sixty acres available. There is no other large park in the vicinity which has much new housing for low and middle income groups. Over 90% of the land is controlled already by the City. I propose that this land be made into a park for the residents of the area as soon as possible.

# II. **Brooklyn**

## A. **Distribution of Parks**

The Borough of Brooklyn is graced by Prospect Park, one of the greatest historic parks in the United States. It has a number of other famous parks such as Fort Greene Park. Brooklyn is also one of the most pleasantly green Boroughs, because of the more than two million trees planted along its sidewalks.

But unequal distribution of park land and recreation facilities is a more severe problem in Brooklyn than in any other Borough. There are, for example, only two indoor swimming pools for the entire Borough.

To correct this situation of poor distribution of parks and facilities in relation to people, I intend to create more parks of varying size, with variegated types of facilities—both indoor and outdoor—particularly in those slum areas where people have no easy way of getting to a now existing park. We must think boldly and reasonably. It is not sufficient to choose four or five plots for vest-pocket parks and to build them, without a coordinated plan that takes into consideration the thoughts, needs, and desires of each community. It will take research, time, wisdom, funds, cooperation and supervision of those communities. Bedford-Stuyvesant will be one of the primary targets for action.

## B. Specific Parks

### 1. *Commodore J. Barry Park*

Broken benches and litter abound. There are by no means enough trash baskets; the people who use this park continually complain that the collection of trash is at best irregular. The facilities for baseball are adequate except for the lack of proper lights. Baseball players should have showers and lockers available in new buildings. I will place this park on the list in Brooklyn that need general rehabilitation as soon as possible.

### 2. *Fort Greene Park*

This is one of the fine parks designed by Olmsted that has been allowed to deteriorate disgracefully. It has been said that no City park is in worse condition. More than half the benches are so badly ripped up that they cannot be used. There is a carpet of broken glass, beer cans, and other refuse covering the grass and pavement. There are too few trash baskets, and those that exist are in shoddy condition. The collection of trash is infrequent. Mothers point to the fences, so torn that they are like barbed wire, surrounding the playgrounds. They have protested continually to the Park Department that these conditions are extremely hazardous for their children. This park is one of the largest in Brooklyn yet has no recreational facilities. People are forced to sit in filthy paved areas; the larger grassy areas are so ill kempt that few people want to go there. This park should be placed high on the list of those to receive a major community center with modern recreation facilities, such as an indoor swimming pool, basketball courts, a gym, air-conditioned halls, and a carpentry shop.

### 3. *Carroll Park*

The park was improved this year. The "improvements" included the following: the elimination of a third of the turf and the replacement of that grassy area with asphalt placed around the trees; the removal of the well-designed old iron fence; and a construction of a cyclone fence. In short, more than one third of the former green area was cleared for a playground. This means that this park, in a quiet area of Brooklyn and conceived as a haven primarily for the adults of the community, now is a total failure. The destruction of a traditional, peaceful park is nowhere more vividly apparent. This park was not improved nor was it given an imaginative new design, nor made better to conform to the present needs of the people who use it—it was cut down into a maintenance project. It is typical of the ugliness that happens when there is a short-sighted policy of too little funds for upkeep.

### ✓ 4. *Cobble Hill*

This new park, designed and constructed in a bright and imaginative way, is an excellent example of what can be done by the Park Department when the City allows it to move ahead on a new idea. Cobble Hill has proved extremely successful. Its success and popularity is clear proof that this type of park must be encouraged throughout all portions of the City. Its success is also corroboration of the belief of certain citizens that some vest-pocket parks should be conceived principally as havens for older people. They need not in every instance be playgrounds for children.

### 5. *Brower Park*

This park, adjacent to the Brooklyn Children's Museum, has been allowed to deteriorate badly. When the new addition to the Museum is finally constructed, this park should be made into a new, attractive, model area, designed if possible by a local landscape architect.

### 6. *Marine Park*

This area is a classic example of a 'rehabilitation' program that has never been carried through. Local citizens tend to call Marine Park "The Dump." After repeated requests by local residents, attempts

were made by the Park Department to clean up, remove the weeds and cut out the tall grass and the ragweed, but the park is again overgrown with weeds and full of garbage and some wrecks of abandoned cars. Half-way measures will not work here. The job has to be done on a massive scale; if that is not possible, part of the area should be turned over to housing.

### 7. *Third Street Park*

I feel that Byrne House, which is a Revolutionary War battle site, should be designated as a National Historic Monument. This would mean that funds for its renovation and maintenance would be forthcoming from the Federal Historic Parks Program as a National Military Park and Battlefield.

### 8. *Fort Hamilton Park*

The recent 8-acre park and playground, developed by the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority and transferred to the Park Department, is an excellent example of new design in which the benches, the swings and the slides are not simply the stereotyped, and thirty-year old standards. But much more could have been done to make the area even more modern and exciting.

### 9. *Prospect Park*

Prospect Park is one of the most magnificent pastoral and naturalistic man made parks in the United States. Many of its features were created from barren land a century ago by thousands of men at great cost. It is one of Brooklyn's finest efforts and one of her most glorious achievements. It was conceived and carried through as a work of art, intended by its designers and builders never to be disturbed or encroached upon or allowed to fall into decay.

In the past fifteen years Prospect Park has been tampered with in an unwarranted and tasteless fashion; several of its historic buildings, designed by America's foremost architects, have been either altered or destroyed without a word of explanation to the public; others, such as the Boathouse, were saved only by a desperate citizens' fight; many of its finest trees have been cut down; several of its most beautiful gardens, the Rose Garden and the Vale of Cashmere, have become weed-filled swamps; statuary has been vandalized and stolen; walks and bridges are shattered; ugly, makeshift buildings have been allowed to stand for years; the old architectural features that have remained have not been restored since the 1930's in even the most rudimentary fashion despite vigorous local protest; third-rate modern structures such as the skating rink on the edge of the lake near the Music Grove have been built in places where they destroy the century-old, perfectly planned vistas. Lack of maintenance has cut the attendance to less than a third in fifteen years; the crime rate is high.

What has happened in Prospect Park is similar to having given a great masterpiece in a museum to an untutored individual who would restore it with acid and a wire brush. The sudden expenditure of \$700,000 for today's rehabilitation of the park for its forthcoming centennial, including \$425,000 for the Vale of Cashmere and the Rose Garden alone, is a perfect example of the enormous sums that people must contribute when no one cares about the everyday reality of maintenance. A little over ten years ago the gardener was removed from the Vale and the Rose Garden. If he had been kept on the job at the normal salary, there would have been no need for the expensive crash program. The costs would have been less than a third of the present \$425,000. Any attempt to excuse this decay as the result of vandalism alone is a cover up for lack of care in preserving a beautiful gift from the past.

I am in favor of the rehabilitation program, but at the same time deplore the reasons it was so appallingly necessary. It is significant to note here that while the Park has been allowed to deteriorate over the years, Abraham Beame has been living but a quarter of a mile away from the Rose Garden.

I will take the following action in Prospect Park:

1. Appoint a Curator to keep the park—an individual who knows the Park's greatness and history and who will advise the Park and Recreation Commissioner on how to preserve and reconstruct it. The Curator will also be charged with preparing a guidebook on the Park to be published and sold by the city.



2. I will see to it that decay due to the neglect of maintenance will not happen during my administration.

3. I will enact firm rules against further encroachment and forbid further tampering with historic structures and gardens. I will endeavor to reconstruct, by means of original drawings, plans, and old photographs, those areas of the Park that have been thoughtlessly altered or destroyed. I will see to it that certain buildings such as the Boathouse are reconstructed professionally, that experts' advice is gained from museums on that reconstruction, and that great old trees are not protected by unsightly enclosures of torn-up wire fence. I will investigate whether the original system of wells, installed by architect Frederick Olmstead so that the lakes would never dry up or have to draw upon city water, destroyed in the 1920's, can once again be put to work.

4. I will try to engage a landscape architect as an adviser for Prospect Park.

5. I will hear and support those local citizens who have been vitally interested in preserving the quality of Prospect Park.

6. I will attempt to have Prospect Park honored as a National Landmark by the Department of the Interior as Central Park recently was. This should be done at the centennial celebration.

### III. Manhattan

Repair and maintenance of existing parks and creation of a certain type of new park for today's recreation needs will be the guiding principles of my park program in Manhattan.

I plan to prepare the following :

1. A complete, up-to-date inventory of all parks, regarding their condition, their facilities and what must be done to make them better.

2. A study into where new parks must be created and what kind of facilities ought to be placed in them, including the vitally important *indoor* centers.

3. A timetable for action and a list of priorities.

#### 1. *Inwood Hill Park*

This is one of the best of the pastoral or nature-walk parks in upper Manhattan. The over-all condition is fair. It needs considerable relandscaping in certain of the higher sections, and the trees need a great deal of pruning. Most of the interior walks need lighting. The playground at Dyckman and Payson Avenue is in poor condition. This would be an ideal place for redesign, incorporating contemporary ideas for playgrounds. Thought should be given to the development of more convenient access to the park areas across the Hudson Drive on the river bank.

#### 2. *Inwood Marina Area*

The river area called Inwood Marina at the end of Dyckman Street is now a blight. The commercial Marina was gutted by fire about three years ago. There have been a number of proposals by the Department of Marine and Aviation, which controls the Marina land, to create a housing development on the site, with high-rise apartments for low- and middle-income groups and a marina-swimming pool complex. The Marina idea is an exciting one. But there is danger that high-rise apartments of too many stories would obliterate the view of the Palisades from Fort Tryon Park and The Cloisters (one of the plans for the apartment houses indicates a series of structures five stories higher than The Cloisters tower). That view has been described a number of times as one of the most striking vistas of the eastern United States.

I agree with the City Planning Commission, which has stated that if apartment houses at the Inwood Marina are necessary they must not be so high as to destroy the view. But I am more in favor of zoning the area as a park with recreation facilities such as a marina, swimming pools of perhaps the floating type, and a restaurant. There is at present not a single good park restaurant on the Hudson River. Plans should also include rehabilitation of the badly deteriorating concrete pier slightly to the north, which, despite its dangerous condition, is used each day almost year-round by many citizens for fishing. The incorporation of the Marina area with the green spaces to the south and north and access to Inwood Hill Park should also be considered.

### 3. *Fort Tryon Park*

Fort Tryon Park is one of the best maintained in the City primarily because The Cloisters is situated within its boundaries. The foreman of the park is dedicated and persistent in his efforts to maintain the area. But Fort Tryon does have its deficiencies. The restaurant south of the Rampart is notorious for its filthy kitchen, its poor food, and its bad service. I propose investigating the franchise of this restaurant. The City must prevail upon the holder of that franchise to clean the place and raise the quality of the food and service.

The hill on the east side of the Park leading down to Dyckman Street needs landscaping, preventive measures against the further erosion of the soil in some areas, and better lighting on the stairs.

The playground at the foot of the hill near Broadway needs rehabilitation. This playground should be considered for a community center with swimming pool and basketball, boxing, and gym facilities.

### 4. *Bennett Park*

The area is primarily playground. The condition is generally good except for the benches, which are badly in need of repair. More imaginative equipment is needed here, too.

### 5. *John Hood Wright Park*

This park is in generally good condition. Its recreation leadership during the off-school months appears to be satisfactory. The Golden Age Center is very successful. Unfortunately, it is not air-conditioned; this should be remedied before next summer. But here, as elsewhere, the problem of maintenance of the peripheral areas of the park is severe. There is a virtual carpet of broken glass and papers covering the north side and the ground on the high point to the northwest, and particularly at the southern entrance on 173rd Street. It is apparent that the two men assigned to cover this park are not sufficient. Four men would take care of it.

### 6. *Area Between High Bridge Park and John Hood Wright Park*

Between High Bridge Park and John Hood Wright there are no small parks or playgrounds. The area is densely populated. A study should be made to determine what city-owned and city-controlled plots might be available for vest-pocket development.

### 7. *Colonial Park*

I approve of the current plans by the City for the rehabilitation of Colonial Park. The paths and particularly the stairs have been in a disgraceful condition for many years. It is high-time that the reconstruction efforts were made.

### 8. *Colonel Charles Young Playground*

After more than three years of request and petition to the Park Department on the part of the inhabitants of the neighborhood, the City has finally begun work to reconstruct the destroyed comfort station in the playground and to rehabilitate the pavements, the torn-up fences, and the playing fields.

It is hoped that the new plans for this area demonstrate some imagination. This park is located in a crucial area—a high-density, high-hazard one—the quality of which would be greatly enhanced by a fine park.

Interviews with employees of the Department of Design of the Park Department at the site leave some doubts as to the nature of the reconstruction. I intend to keep close track of this operation, which I believe will be vital for the general enhancement of the entire area, for Charles Young is one of the four major playgrounds serving Harlem's youth and one of the largest play areas in all of Harlem. This park should be considered for a community center with indoor pool, basketball, gym, etc.

#### 9. *Mount Morris Park*

The rehabilitation program of Mount Morris Park, which took almost five years to get underway, is typical of the slow, indecisive working operation of the city in dealing with an area described by one newspaper as "desperately in need of rehabilitation." Before 1961 community groups began their movement to clean up and reconstruct the park. In 1964-65 the City Planning Commission stated that funds amounting to \$1,058,000 must be allocated for the work. Of this amount a bare \$92,725 was allocated by the Board of Estimate. In the following year nothing was allocated. The 1966-67 budget plans call for the work to be finished in a year. I heartily approve of the work that is now starting. I ask only why it was not started when local residents and community groups saw that the need for work was already pressing.

#### 10. *Morningside Park*

This park, number *one* on a list of the twelve most feared parks in the United States, originally designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, has sunk into an abyss of decay. It has rightfully been called "a raw no-man's land between a ghetto and affluence."

I plan to do the following :

1. Implement immediately the three-stage renewal program to repair the erosion of the land, enlarge the playhouse at the north end of the park, carry out major landscape planning, build retaining walls, repair or replace the badly decayed benches, and install proper lighting. Some of these steps are now under way. They must be carefully and constantly supervised.

2. See that there is closer work on the part of the Park Department with the various Community Action groups, many of which have complained of great difficulty in making liaison with the Park Department.

3. Control further encroachment. The Board of Education has already started work on P. S. 36, against the recommendation of the City Planning Commission. Columbia University plans for the erection of a gymnasium must be restudied to determine whether or not this next step in the encroachment process is valid.

4. Investigate the pressing difficulties of maintenance. At present, 17 maintenance men work annually on a budget of \$115,000. Morningside needs a greater share of the maintenance budget.

#### 11. *Thomas Jefferson Park*

The park is large, and has a good-sized ball field and a bathing area with an adult pool and a sizable three-foot deep wading pool. The children's garden is clearly a great success. What is needed here, is adequate lighting for the baseball field. Lights throughout the park would also be beneficial since Jefferson could be used after twilight. The sitting area near the swings is now covered with asphalt. The trees in this area are very fine—but they are spoiled by the unremitting dullness of the asphalt. The small open area just to the west of the children's garden could be made into a miniature landscape by the use of dirt fill, contoured and planted.

The park is in satisfactory condition, but suffers the disadvantage (like almost every park in Manhattan) of having the same stereotyped pattern of standards.

#### 12. *Area North of 110th Street*

From 110th Street north, in all sections of Harlem, we need many vest-pocket parks and sitting areas. In June of 1965, a list was made of possible plots in central and east Harlem with estimated expenses for rehabilitation. In most instances sites were chosen where there was or would be sponsoring organizations—block organizations, Haryou, etc.

My task force for parks came across an ideal plot for the development of a vest-pocket park or adventure playground, which has not been fully investigated. This plot is on 109th Street between First and Second Avenues. Of particular interest is the remains of a tenement demolished, according to one inhabitant of the neighborhood, about seventeen years ago. There foundations could be transformed with little effort into an interesting network of tunnels, bridges, etc. for children to play in. If the inhabitants of the area cleaned up the lot, the cost of making this plot into an exciting playground would be no more than \$3,000.

I will charge the Park & Recreation Department to be constantly on the lookout for vest-pocket sites and to encourage and aid, when possible, local organizations in the development of such small areas of recreation. But, I feel strongly that the Department should guard against the "invasion" of their men, equipment, and ideas into these projects, the value of which, after all, rests largely upon the fact that they are local achievements. The attitude of the Park Department should be one of advise and consent based upon an eagerness to see the area dotted with dozens of small recreation areas.

#### 13. *Riverside Park*

This park, consisting of roughly 270 acres, was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted. It suffers under the same burden of poor maintenance and neglect as many parks in Manhattan, and, like others, it is threatened by encroachment opposed by local inhabitants.

If final plans are approved, a playground to be called the Adele Rosenthal Levy Memorial Playground will be constructed between 102nd and 106th Streets on Riverside Drive. The plans published in 1962 show, among other facilities, a roller rink, an amphitheater, a bandshell, and modern play equipment such as concrete mounds and pyramids. The Levy family has paid or pledged \$100,000 for landscaping and is seeking an additional \$350,000. The City is to supply the remaining funds. Mayor Wagner is in favor of the playground, but Commissioner Morris and many of the local citizens are against it, because, the latter claim, "it will replace grassy areas with more concrete." The estimated cost of the playground is said to be \$1 million. Commissioner Morris has said that the figure might even be higher; the local opponents of the plan claim that it will come to nearly \$2 million. As one of the founders of the Citizens Committee for Children, Adele Levy deserves to be greatly honored by the City for her countless contributions to it and to its underprivileged children. But it seems to me that the memory of Mrs. Levy would be honored in a more significant manner if this fine playground were placed in an area of the City where the need for recreation facilities for children is truly desperate.

#### 14. *DeWitt Clinton Park*

The general condition is poor. Rehabilitation is called for. A sign posted near the ball field states that no soccer playing is allowed. This prohibition seems unrealistic. The area is inhabited by people who favor soccer over almost every other sport besides baseball.

Lights are badly needed for the baseball diamond and the playing field. Immediate care for the trees and the halt in further soil erosion is also necessary.

#### 15. *Chelsea Park*

The condition is generally good. The floodlights for the baseball diamonds need to be replaced. This is perhaps an ideal place for a building with basketball courts and rooms for quiet recreation. Television should be installed in several of the rooms.

#### 16. *Madison Square Park*

I have come out publicly against the construction of a garage for vehicles under Madison Square Park. I believe it would not only destroy the existing park but would eventually add to the traffic congestion in the area.

#### 17. *Washington Square Park*

The park has become notorious in the United States, owing to the indecent behavior of some of the visitors. The situation has become so bad that the law-abiding citizens cannot bring their children to the playground areas. It is *vital* that in this park a greatly-expanded police patrol be established, as I have specified in my position paper relating to measures against Crime.

Even before work begins on the rehabilitation of certain areas of the park a number of maintenance measures must be undertaken immediately:

1. The cleaning or repair of clogged drains and storm sewer lines and the installation of catch basins to eliminate washouts and flooding of paths and pavements.

2. Replacement of benches beyond repair, and repair of those still usable.

3. Eradication of the numerous defacings on Washington Arch and the Holley monument. The foundations of the latter are sagging and should be reset.

4. Protection of one of the oldest landmarks in the City—the great English Elm that stands on the northwest corner of the park, which dates back to pre-Revolutionary times. At present the soil around the base has become a latrine for those who hang around the area at night.

#### 18. *James J. Walker Park*

This is one of the most unappealing parks in Manhattan. There is nothing but asphalt and concrete; the bleachers are corroding badly; the walls are covered with obscene writings; there is broken glass throughout. The obscene writings should be removed and the glass cleaned up and kept cleaned up.

#### 19. *Midtown Manhattan*

One of the defects of our park system in Manhattan is that there are too few parks convenient to the shopper and the office-worker. There is no reason why thousands of office workers should be forced to sit on the fenders of automobiles when they want to relax outside, for several minutes during their lunch hour.

The small parks in the commercial districts should not be looked upon as luxuries. They are necessities.

If a system of small parks is to succeed, there must be many of them, and they must be placed fairly close to one another.

Establishing a network of parks in commercial areas is obviously not easy. Land values are high. Space even for offices and shops is at a premium. One suggestion that the Building Code be altered to make it mandatory for a new commercial or office building to incorporate a sitting area into its design is a bold one, worthy of further examination.

The architect Robert Zion (of the firm of Zion and Breen), has worked closely with me and my staff on a number of park proposals. The following basic ideas and features for one type of midtown sitting park are those of Zion and Breen as published in one of their preliminary pamphlets. Although the concept clearly needs more work, the fundamentals, are, I believe, valid. I plan to start with the following ideas, change them where necessary and expand upon those which have obvious merit.

1. The walls are the walls of the surrounding buildings.

2. The floor should be imaginative—something more than a pavement to walk upon. It should be a delight to the eye with interesting patterns of cobblestones, bricks, pebbles, etc.

3. The ceiling should be the dense canopy of leaves formed by the close planting of trees twelve to fifteen feet apart.

4. The purpose of such a park is rest.

5. The midtown park should be small—even as small as fifty by one hundred feet.

6. The furniture should include single chairs, light and portable.

7. There should be trees, numerous and densely planted for shade, vines to cover the walls, and occasional tubs of bright, boldly colored flowers. There is no need for lawns and flower beds requiring constant care.

8. There might be colorful kiosks or small houses with vending machines for sandwiches and drinks. In the larger parks there might be cafés.

9. The estimated costs of installation of such a park, according to this firm, would come to no more than \$30,000.

## 20. *Central Park*

This is one of the great historic urban parks of the eastern United States, designed and created a little over one hundred years ago by the visionary landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his associate Calvert Vaux. In June of this year it was honored by the Department of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark.

Despite the Park's designation as a historic landmark, it is number six in a survey of the twelve most feared parks in the nation. The scooter patrol, initiated not long ago, has cut down significantly on the disgraceful crime rate. That patrol should be strengthened. Greater numbers of foot and horse patrols are needed.

Despite this designation, there seems to be little awareness among city officials for the need to preserve and maintain this park. Paul O'Dwyer recently proposed that Central Park be placed on a list of eleven parks that should be declared monuments and therefore not changed in any substantial manner. I am in favor of this idea. Unfortunately the idea of the list was rejected by the City Council. At present there are no restrictions on encroachment of park land. The Landmarks Preservation Commission, established recently by Mayor Wagner, has no jurisdiction over park land even if that park land is clearly a landmark and designated as such by the Federal Government.

Since its completion, countless New York citizens have fought against encroachment upon Central Park. Among schemes seriously furthered throughout the years have been a racetrack for noisy vehicles, a replica of the World War I trenches of Verdun, an enormous Cathedral of all faiths, and so many other structures that if they had all been built Central Park would have been entirely gobbled up.

The restaurant proposed at the southeast corner of the park, part of the money for which has been pledged by Huntington Hartford, is no less an encroachment than these unwarranted ideas of past years. I will do everything I can to stop the construction of this restaurant, to which almost every citizen's group interested in the beautification of the city is opposed. I will attempt to discuss with Mr. Hartford the possibility of using his generous pledge of funds for another, better purpose. I believe that the major rehabilitation or reconstruction of an already existing facility in Central Park such as the 79th St. Boat-house would be not only more beneficial to the public in future years but of more enduring value and memory to Mr. Hartford as well.

A certain type of restaurant is needed in Central Park, but not necessarily the complex structure Mr. Hartford envisioned. In many areas it is impossible to obtain as much as a hot dog. I would recommend a series of colorful refreshment kiosks surrounded by small tables and chairs where food and soft drinks could be purchased inexpensively and where conversation and relaxation is encouraged.

In order to prevent the thoughtless and tasteless alteration or destruction of some of the universally good original features of the Olmsted design, I propose the appointment of a Curator of Central Park. This would be an individual who knows intimately the history of the park and who would be able to give professional advice on the repair and reconstruction of its original elements. The Curator would also be charged with the preparation of a guidebook or manual on Central Park, to be published by the City, and sold in various places in the Park.

The Curator would also study in detail and gather together all the sketches, plans, watercolors, and charts of the original plan of Central Park, in order to have exact reconstructions made of certain of the now missing original elements, in the same accurate manner that Colonial Williamsburg has been brought to life.

#### **IV. Queens**

The Borough of Queens is endowed with the greatest amount of open space developed for park land in the City. Thus the comprehensive plan of parks in Queens need not concern itself with the acquisition of any more large tracts of land. There is, however, one exception to this, namely, Flushing Meadows.

##### *1. Flushing Meadows*

If elected I plan to focus attention on a thorough post-Fair plan to restore Flushing Meadows and transform it into a usable, enjoyable, and magnificent park. Robert Moses has announced his intention to make of Flushing Meadows "the Central Park of Queens." To achieve this admirable objective we must take immediate steps to tap the best brains available to ensure that this park will really be the park of tomorrow.

I believe that so far we have got off to a bad start. To date the City's post-Fair plan indicates a prosaic approach to the question. It is based upon the demolition of some of the Fair's buildings, the retention of others that are not likely to contribute to a beautiful park (the Ferris Wheel, for example), and the restoration of the old layout, which, according to a number of eminent architects, was out of date even in 1940. If we follow such a conventional course, we will miss the opportunity to make a great park at Flushing Meadows.

There are three separate parts of Flushing Meadows that have three different purposes and demand three different approaches.

1. The area surrounding the Federal Pavilion. I favor the retention of the Federal Pavilion. President Johnson has himself appealed for the preservation of the building which cost the government nearly \$11 million to construct. I would negotiate with the Federal Government a lease arrangement under which the pavilion would be used for a new Federal facility in New York.

I am informed that a number of federal agencies are looking for sites for research centers, job training schools, and other federal facilities. This building could be used for any one of these purposes. It would be an advantage to both the City and federal government to retain this pavilion, pumping new federal moneys and possible employment into the City, saving the federal government the cost of a new structure elsewhere, and also saving the taxpayer the estimated \$2 million in demolition costs.

2. The area to the south of Grand Central Parkway, including the Transportation pavilions and the Hall of Science (already slated to be a permanent structure). This might prove an excellent place for a great Museum of Science and Technology, endowed by Industry and private funds. Every phase of the history of man's technical and scientific achievements could be shown by a series of dramatic exhibitions. I am sure that such a museum, now lacking in New York, would enjoy the outstanding popularity of similar institutions elsewhere in the United States and in Europe.

3. The area including the Unisphere (unfortunately slated for retention) and the New York State Pavilion.

This should be developed as a great park. I am in favor of keeping the New York State Pavilion.

Finally, no matter what ultimate design is created for Flushing Meadows, it should not emanate from a firm of highway engineers. I plan to name an advisory board of outstanding architects, who shall be charged with establishing an international competition for the transformation of Flushing Meadows into an exciting great park. Only by this means will we have that "park of tomorrow."

## 2. *Alley Pond Park*

One more incidence of what the *Times* describes as "the continued violation of the integrity of parks" is the building of Sanitation Department garages in Alley Pond Park. This action has been opposed by many local and city-wide citizens groups, yet the City has allowed the project to go through. To do this, special legislation had to be passed in Albany revoking the dedication of this land to park purposes.

## 3. *Willetts Point*

For four years the City has been trying to acquire a 67-acre tract of land here for a park. Though all the City's daily newspapers and many citizens groups have been opposed to such acquisition, their pleas have gone unheeded by the Mayor, the Board of Estimate, and the Budget Director. The basis for opposition has been simply that this is no place for a park. Hemmed in by super highways and railroads as this site is, it would present a grave hazard for children and adults going there to use the proposed ball fields and tennis courts. I am opposed to the acquisition of this land. The funds appropriated for acquisition of this site could be better used for rehabilitation of existing parks.

## V. **Richmond**

In the past hundred years, the Island has been called "the greatest opportunity for intelligent, creative city planning" more times than any other area of the City.

The situation developing on Staten Island is such that we should stop uttering empty phrases and face up to the challenges and problems of making Staten Island the great model of urban living that it could be.

The development of Staten Island is a difficult, expensive task that needs to be planned with great care. *The following steps should be undertaken as soon as possible:*

1. Preparation of a comprehensive plan. This plan is not to be understood as a series of urban renewal projects. The plan should be developed by the City Planning Commission in concert with the Department of Parks and Recreation and other city agencies involved, such as the Housing Authority and the Department of Real Estate. The City Planning Commission shall see to it that there is a firm method of liaison between itself and the other agencies and local planning groups, several of which have been working for some time on the development of plans for various sections of the Island. The plans suggested in general terms but not made specific as yet by the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority must be studied in full and wherever possible incorporated into the concepts proposed by the City Planning Commission.

2. Orderly mapping of the pertinent districts of Staten Island.

3. Slowdown of the current rate of the sale to developers of city-owned land or city-controlled land.

The sale of city-owned land for quick moneys has happened with disconcerting speed in Staten Island. An Editorial in the New York Times of February 15, 1964 entitled *Destroying a City* is particularly pertinent regarding the disposal of city-owned land for quick cash: "Who wants the sell-off? Comptroller A. Beame and the Department of Real Estate seem to think that money in the hand is worth the



loss to the next generation of a major middle income residential development and of an orderly urban environment. . . . There is more than one way to destroy a city, but this kind of near-sighted civic sabotage seems to be about the surest in terms of short term gain and long range damage. The commission now studying the problem should come up with a coordinated public land policy. Selling off New York's future is no way to balance the budget."

4. Re-examination of the system of priorities for certain proposed highways and expressways, namely, the advantages of building the West Shore Expressway *before* construction of the Richmond Expressway.

5. A firm and resolute program to preserve as much open space as possible for recreation. Particular attention should be paid to the Green Belt and new park areas. Staten Island has more undeveloped green space than any other Borough. I heartily endorse the present program of the Park Department announced recently by Commissioner Morris, to acquire 1,400 acres of land on Staten Island for park purposes. I shall make every effort to see that funds become available to carry the program through.

6. Special attention should be paid to the cleaning up of the beaches. Here, again, the pollution of the water is such that we must recognize that it will take as much as fifteen to twenty years to bring the pollution under control.

7. Investigation of the possibility of developing the west side of the Island as a wild life preserve and a marina for shore recreation purposes.

8. A study into what state and federal funds might be available for the special problems of Staten Island.

## **B. Specific Areas**

### 1. *Stapleton*

This is a waterfront area lying opposite the Bay Ridge section of Brooklyn. Between Fort Wadsworth and the Stapleton piers to the north, I would propose, following the City Planning Commission, acquiring land for recreation purposes. In addition, development of the rest of the pier lands should be zoned in such a way as to create a scenic gateway into the port and to enhance and complement park development on the Brooklyn side of the Narrows.

### 2. *Camp High Rock*

After a considerable struggle by local conservation groups, Camp High Rock was recently acquired by the City to be used as a pastoral park with emphasis upon wild life. According to the City Planning Commission, development costs have not been estimated, but a study is underway to determine how the land will be used and developed. I believe that the program should be one of great restraint. The area should remain largely naturalistic, with walks and forests.

### 3. *The Green Belt*

Citizen groups and a number of public officials have been urging the City for years to establish a large band of open space, comprising public land, cemeteries, college campuses, and open recreation facilities to create a great urban green belt along the central ridge of the Island. According to the City Planning Commission, the bare minimum needed for the acquisition of the land would be \$15 million.

### 4. *Great Kills Park*

Here the tremendous potential for swimming, boating, and other waterfront sports must be developed as soon as feasible.

### 5. *South Shore and Richmond Country Clubs*

Great care must be exercised so that these beautiful areas are preserved for public open space use. The South Shore Country Club property has just been mapped as a park by the City Planning Commission. The Commission estimates the cost of this land as \$2.5 million. I propose that the City acquire that land for development of an important part of the green belt. I would also suggest that the Richmond Country Club be acquired as park land, if the Club decides to sell that property. This land would be of enormous value for recreation purposes and must not be allowed to fall haphazardly into the hands of unscrupulous developers.

### 6. *Wolfe's Pond Park*

This area, one of the favorites of local inhabitants, is a beautiful, wooded park with pond and contiguous beachfront. Plans for the development of Wolfe's Pond are in process, but work has not begun, because of a lack of funds. Its future, as the City Planning Commission emphasizes, rests upon the arrangements to be worked out between the state and the City concerning the conservation value of the area. The capital improvement program of the City Planning Commission indicates that almost \$1.8 million is needed for improvement but that funds will not be available until after 1970-71.

It is imperative that there be an investigation into what state and federal funds might be available for this park owing to its conservation value. It is also important that the civic groups that have considered plans for Wolfe's Pond be taken into consultation.

### 7. *Annadale*

I am in favor of the urban renewal proposal of the City Planning Commission for this community, which calls for development of the area to preserve the integrity of the residential section by maintaining natural features.

## **VI. BEACHES, ISLANDS, AND WATERFRONT**

New York surpasses almost every great metropolis in the world in its profusion and variety of waterfronts.

Yet we have ignored the water; we have literally built walls between the people and the water. We have stifled the thrilling recreation possibilities of the rivers that surround us and work their way into every Borough. Anyone who has stood on those points of the East River where the river surges past, busy with all sorts of craft day or night, cannot fail to understand the river's magic and potential. Instead of enhancing the river vistas, we have stopped looking at them. Large numbers of piers are rotting. Highways form dangerous barriers. Water transportation for recreation is dwindling. We have handed over a considerable amount of our 578 miles of waterways to blight and pollution.

One of the few sections of the waterfront that enriches the river view by a wonderful arrangement of parks, roadways, and dwellings, capturing the beauty of a city on the water, is the Riverside Drive area. This, like the great parks in the City, is a product of the nineteenth century. This successful concept of a hundred years ago should be revived along other parts of the waterfront, and the individuals of this city who wish to blend their contemporary ideas of landscape design with the great ideas of the past should be enlisted to help create the New York of tomorrow.

Effective development of the City's waterfront for park and recreation purposes must be based, first, on stamping out the Black Death of water pollution. According to experts, certain areas may never be raised to a level of purity necessary for swimming, but they are not cancelled out for other recreation or wildlife preservation projects. Such permanently polluted areas include certain sections of Jamaica Bay, beaches along the north shore of Staten Island, and the upper East River between Manhattan and the Bronx.

Other areas, though capable of being purified, will require as much as twenty to fifty years before their waters can be used for swimming.

To assure that our waterfront, "this most priceless resource," is utilized most advantageously for the citizens of New York City and the millions of people who come here each year not only for business, shopping, and cultural events but for recreation as well, I propose that all waterfront no longer used for commercial purposes be placed under the jurisdiction of the City Planning Commission. We must not allow the various independent agencies with claims upon such lands to develop the waterfronts in a piecemeal fashion.

### **Waterfront Uses**

In addition to the traditional use of waterfront for beaches, I intend to give more attention to developing areas for cycling, walking, and fishing; marinas; moorings for floating swimming pools, restaurants, and multiple-use recreational barges. I will start to build recreation piers and to convert existing piers no longer in commercial use to recreational purposes. These structures could include sitting areas, arcade shelters, refreshment concessions, and possibly bandshells.

### **Specific Needs**

#### *1. Welfare Island*

Any park and recreation facilities on Welfare Island must be so unusual and exciting that they will attract all-day excursions of large groups. They must also provide a variety of activities for all ages as well as facilities to accommodate them throughout the day; places to eat, picnic tables, refreshment stands, and restaurants; places for rest in tree-shaded areas and under pergola walks along the river; adequate comfort stations.

One suggestion for the Island is a park laid out like the city of Trieste, that is, a park with canals wandering through green and wooded areas.

Since the hospitals will not be moved in the near future and since existing transportation to the Island cannot handle great crowds of people, I see no urgent need to place Welfare Island high on our list of park development.

#### *2. The Bronx*

I will act immediately on continued programs of water pollution control in Eastchester Bay and also on the proposed acquisition of the 32 acres needed to extend the Orchard Beach-Pelham Bay Park waterfront area.

#### *3. Randall's and Ward's Islands*

These Islands, with over four hundred acres of park land, constitute our greatest large park area close to Manhattan, Queens, and the Bronx. At present Randall's Island is conveniently accessible by foot from Manhattan alone. I will consider putting in a series of bridges from the East Bronx and from Astoria in Queens to the Islands for both pedestrians and cyclists. At the same time I shall also endeavor to widen the narrow strip that connects the park areas of the Islands—again for pedestrians and cyclists.

#### *4. Rockaways—Breezy Point*

Long-range plans for New York City recreation must ultimately include a vast beach complex stretching from Jacob Riis Park west to Rockaway tip. But I will take into consideration two obstacles that stand in the way of establishing this park, obstacles that can be overcome only over a period of

some years. One concerns ownership and use of the 262 acres held by the Breezy Point cooperatives. These people cannot simply be thrown aside by condemnation based on eminent domain. We cannot just "dump" them. I favor the specific proposal made by Commissioner Bloustein of the Planning Commission and others: that the citizens in the cooperative be allowed to retain use of their lands for their lifetimes, after which they would be acquired by the City.

The second obstacle is Fort Tilden. The Army recently stated again that it has no intention of moving out of Fort Tilden, and it is unrealistic to plan a successful "great" beach connecting Breezy Point with Jacob Riis while Tilden remains a military installation.

In addition, I feel that some use must be found for the structures begun by Atlantic Development between Fort Tilden and the cooperatives. The developers, in all fairness to them, should never have been allowed to proceed with construction as far as they have. This is just one more example of lack of decisive action on the part of the Wagner administration.

In the meantime, I wholeheartedly support proposals to map the area between Beach 193rd Street and Beach 222nd Street as part of the Breezy Point Beach Park.

#### 5. *Coney Island*

I am opposed to housing of any sort on the site of the Tilyou Amusement Park or anywhere touching Coney Island beaches. If the entertainment center must go, what we must eventually have in this area is a buffer zone of beach and green parkland between the ocean and the housing developments that back this strip, an arrangement similar to the fine combination of water, green, and housing on Manhattan's Riverside Drive.

#### 6. *Manhattan*

Earlier this year the City Planning Commission completed a comprehensive, area-by-area survey and outline plan for the Manhattan waterfront. Though the Commission staff found that significantly fewer opportunities exist for revision of the waterfront than is customarily believed, the plans, if carried out, would create for the citizens of New York City many more recreation areas along the waters than now exist.

The CPC study listed the areas for improvement and development in the orders of high, medium, and low priority. Below is a summary of those areas the development of which would be predominantly for recreation and park purposes. We have omitted from the list areas suggested primarily for housing, which of course would include recreation areas; and also mixed-use areas, which would contain small park areas.

#### 7. *High-Priority Opportunities*

Conversion of a pier in the Chelsea area no longer needed or appropriate for shipping into a recreation pier.

Development of the area along the Hudson from 37th Street to 43rd Street for recreation purposes with improved facilities for sightseeing and excursion boats.

Development of the area along the Hudson from West 125th Street to West 145th Street and the Dyckman Street area for park and recreation purposes, to close the gaps in the nine-mile stretch of waterfront park land from West 72nd to Spuyten Duyvil.

#### 8. *Low-Priority Opportunities*

Development of the water area west of Greenwich Village from West Houston to 14th Street with particular attention to recreation facilities and access from the Village to the water. There is one pier in this area, at the foot of Morton Street, that with a modest amount of money could be rehabilitated at once to serve the many citizens who come to the pier daily, even though it is in a dilapidated and even dangerous condition.

Development of marina and waterfront recreation facilities along the Hudson from 57th Street to 72nd Street. This area should serve the entire community and be tied in with the proposed Litho City project, if it materializes, to be built over the New York Central yards between 60th and 70th Streets.

The Manhattan waterfront plan of the City Planning Commission is sound, and in drawing it up the Commission has rightfully carried out its planning functions. Any revision and redesign of Manhattan's waterfront highways must take into consideration their relationship not only to existing structures and open spaces but to their proposed development or redevelopment if we are to achieve desirable and needed waterfront improvements. The Commission has every right to see the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority's plans for the revamping of the West Side Highway from Battery Park to 72nd Street. So far, Commissioner Moses has refused to hand over these plans to the CPC. As Mayor of New York City, I shall put a halt to the unilateral planning actions of independent public operating agencies such as the TBTA to the extent that the powers of the office allow.

#### 9. *Swinburne and Hoffman Islands*

The joining of Swinburne and Hoffman Islands, located in the lower Bay, to create a 350-acre park is a novel but unrealistic idea. The concept of construction of a massive dike between the two islands will certainly cost much more than the \$685,000 appropriated for this purpose.

Although I am in favor of eventually building this park, to be named in honor of the late Bernard Baruch, we have more desperate park and recreation needs in our blighted areas which demand more immediate attention.

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